

JUN 3 1966

Approved For Release 1999/09/17 : CIA-RDP75-001

STATINTL

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Story Behind the Story CIA Of Duke's Famous 'Bath'

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Ambassador to Spain Angier Biddle Duke revealed yesterday that his now-famous walk into the ocean at Palomares last winter did more than soothe fears of contamination before the United States nuclear bomb device was recovered.

It avoided what was mushrooming into an incident of such international proportions that Spain's tourism was suffering, the diplomat told the Woman's National Democratic Club in his version of the story behind the story.

'Grim Days'

"Those were grim days," Duke recalled.

"They were asking questions in Britain's House of Commons about what the attitude of the British government should be in advising tourists whether it was safe to go to Spain.

"French tourist agencies were reporting large numbers of cancellations.

"And my colleague in Bonn, George McGhee reported German customs inspectors were using geiger counters to test Spanish agricultural imports.

"The picture looked bleak despite our efforts.

'Immortalized'

"We had to do something dramatic," he pointed out, "so Spanish tourist authorities and I got the idea of taking our families to the shore, especially since they were about to open a tourist hotel there.

"I did feel the press around



AMBASSADOR ANGIER
BIDDLE DUKE
He Talks

the world got the point. A few weeks later the device was recovered and I can say we were all relieved."

The incident over, Duke and his old friends, the Spanish

Ambassador and the Marquesa de Merry Del Val, figured they could kid about it yesterday.

The ambassador called Duke's wintry swim in the ocean an act "above and beyond the call of duty which endeared him to public opinion and immortalized this famous bath.

"But he was glad he didn't catch cold.

"Can't you imagine what the headlines behind the Iron Curtain would have been—'Imperialist Caught In His Own Net' or 'U.S. Envoy seriously ill from contamination from H-bomb dropped on Spain by the CIA!'"

The Marquesa introduced the Ambassador with a poem composed for the occasion by George Abdell of the Protocol Division.

Abdell could not be present, but the Marquesa did the honors with great aplomb. It read like this—Remember that A-bomb dropped in the sea? Angier said the bomb could do no harm so took a swim so you could see. I am only thankful it was not me!